175 These were the wealthy group who had large numbers of sheep
648 and camels. In fact, most of the animals taken east to
722 Amriyya died on the way or were expropriated by the British.
556 'Umran Kailani, "who owned one thousand camels" and was the
166 shaikh of the 'Ali Ahmar section of the Awlad 'Ali at the time, refused to go to Amriyya. The Bedouins say that he was treated very well by the Germans who asked him to form a local government and promised him all the help and supplies that he needed. It is difficult to obtain figures on how many Bedouins made the migration to the Nile Valley and how many remained behind in the Al-Qasr area. One informant told me that before [162] the war there were about 80,000 members of the Awlad 'Ali in the Western Desert and that out of this number, about 30,000 remained behind.

175 Those who sought refuge at Amriyya returned to the
648 al-Qasr area at the end of 1942 after the defeat of the Germans
•727 at al-Alamain. They found things greatly changed. Before the war, there had been about twenty buildings in the al-Qasr area and most of these were bombed out by the air war. The loss of animals and the damage to the land made the resumption of normal life quite difficult for the Bedouins. Underneath, the land was literally a bed of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines left by the advance and retreat of three different armies. This restricted Bedouin travel and everyday food-
648 getting activities. This condition, which still exists, has
727

important effects on contemporary al-Qasr. There remain about 11 million land mines in the ground between Marsa Matruh and Sallum. Accidents connected with these mines take one thousand Bedouin lives every year, and cause about 10,000 injuries annually. (Reported in al-Ahram, January, 1965). This danger limits the areas in which the Bedouins can use the tractor, and, as a result, a great deal of the coastal land must be plowed by hand. In al-Qasr, physical disfigurements resulting from mine mishaps were quite common, and most families have had members killed in this way. In one al-Qasr lineage, 'Ailit Ma'fas, there have been sixteen men killed by mines since 1943.

Change and Present Attitudes

Political and economic changes, begun at the turn of the century, have continued into the present. The Bedouins of al-Qasr have been increasingly drawn into the political and economic life of the Egyptian national community. They have come to depend upon the national market for their products and upon governmental agricultural subsidies for their security. The net result of this process has been a sedentary Bedouin society which is not quite tribal and not quite peasant. Al-Qasr has this in-between quality--what Fallers (1961) has called the tertium quid quality.

It is difficult to gauge the feelings of the Bedouins of al-Qasr about the social changes taking place. They complain

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

Italians to occupy it on 21 April, the Birthday of Rome. This proved to be less favourable an augury than was hoped, for early in June two of their columns advancing from Ajadabiya on Marsa al-Braiqa were almost annihilated by Magharba tribesmen.

Their experience in the *barqa* taught the Italians afresh the lesson of 1911 to 1915, that against Bedouin unwieldy columns advancing without concealment in a direct line on definite and fixed objectives could lead to little more than skirmishes, for the enemy was too wise to become involved in decisive action and mobile enough to avoid it; so they adopted the new tactics of making surprise raids by mechanized units on the Bedouin encampments, slaughtering man and beast indiscriminately, and destroying the grain stores. In these raids, on what in a non-colonial war would be regarded as the civilian population, the purpose was to kill as many of the Bedouin as possible, striking terror into the hearts of the shepherd folk of Cyrenaica. When the rains came and mechanized transport could no longer be used, the camps were bombed and machine-gunned from the air. The Bedouin suffered greatly from this persistent strafing, the Italian estimate of their losses—I must repeat that Italian figures are highly suspect—from 6 March to 3 September 1923 being 800 killed, 230 captured, and 1,000 wounded, besides about 700 camels and 22,000 sheep killed or confiscated. These losses were incurred only in the western part of Cyrenaica, for during the opening phase the rest of the country was quiet, except for minor skirmishes between Sidi 'Umar and the Italians in the Marmarica. At the end of the year the Sanusi forces had retired to country where they were less vulnerable, roughly to south and east of the line al-Braiqa–al-Qatafiya–Msus, with infiltrations everywhere along it towards the Italian posts.

The ease with which they had entered Ajadabiya and had raided and overcome resistance in the *barqa* generally had misled the Italians into believing that they would encounter little resistance elsewhere. They were further misled by the number of submissions they received at the commencement of the campaign: by the end of May 1923, 10,380 in the Ajadabiya zone, 3,417 in the Banghazi zone, and 7,000 in the zone of al-Marj; a total of 20,797 with 6,028 tents and more than 10,000

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

penetration, though they were assisted by contingents from the Darsa, Hasa, and 'Abaidat.

In the fighting between March and June of 1924 the Italians reckoned that about 600 men of the 'Abid, Bara'asa, and northern 'Awaqir had been killed and 25,000 head of their livestock had been captured. In the summer and autumn at least another 250 were killed and about 1,500 camels and 17,000 sheep and goats captured. In spite of these, what were to them very heavy, casualties, the Bedouin continued to harass Italian posts and communications. Salih Lataiwish with his Magharba tribesmen menaced Ajadabiya; Abu al-Qasim al-Zintani with an 'Awaqir band threatened the advanced Italian bases at al-Abyar, al-Rajma, and Banina; Sidi 'Umar with the 'Abid tribal band contained the posts in the al-Marj sector, and detachments under his lieutenant 'Ali bu Rahayyim operated against communications between al-Marj and Talmaitha; Husain Juwaifi's Bara'asa band worried the garrisons at al-Zawiya al-Baida, al-Fayidiya, and Slanta; and Qtait bu Musa with his Hasa and 'Abaidat volunteers was camped opposite Khawalan. Behind these detachments were the camps of the Bedouin who had not submitted, even in appearance, in the *sirwal*, the *barqa al-baida*, and along the southern slopes of the plateau everywhere. The Italians found it necessary to pause to consolidate gains of territory and to carry out a reorganization of their operational units.

Sidi 'Umar's strategy at the time, both as Commander of the 'Abid band and as Commander-in-Chief of all the guerrilla forces on the plateau, was to hold its southern slopes. Their rugged desolation prevented the use of mechanized forces against him and gave him tactical superiority over foot and horse patrols. From the slopes he was able both to menace the Italian posts and communications on the plateau and to cover the families of his fighting men in their camps to the south of it. The Italian answer to these tactics was obvious. They could not prevent guerrilla bands from circulating on the plateau in the cover of forest and deep ravines, but they had by this time established themselves in sufficient strength on the margin of the plateau, and had gained sufficient experience in the handling of mechanized patrols to attack the camps of non-combatants in the flat steppe country to the south. These camps were easily

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

the population, thereby irritating them into renewed rebellion. The net result was that while the Italians could prevent the Bedouin bands from massing, the Bedouin could make them pay too high a price for dispersing, and without dispersing they could not ensure mobility. Mombelli's plan was found to be too costly and fatiguing for the rather meagre results obtained.

Early in 1926 occurred a spectacular interlude which focused attention away from the plateau. The Italians sent an imposing column to take the little oasis of Jaghbub, the historic seat of the Sanusiya Order and the burial-place of its founder. The column met with no opposition and the oasis was surrendered by the Shaikh of the zawiya there, Husain al-Susi, on 7 February. Once again the Italians were jubilant and hoped that their troubles had ended, believing that the capture of the sacred city of the Sanusiya would so adversely affect Sidi 'Umar's prestige that his followers would forthwith desert him. These hopes showed great lack of understanding of the Bedouin mind. In fact, the expedition to Jaghbub, though it showed technical ability, had no strategic significance and was politically a disappointment.

So convinced had the Italians been that Sidi 'Umar would attempt to save Jaghbub that they conducted at the same time a vigorous offensive on the plateau intended as a diversion to prevent him using part of his meagre forces for the purpose. The beasts and crops of the Patriots were systematically destroyed where they were found in the area of guerrilla operations. Italian figures for Patriot losses in the ensuing engagements were 303 killed and 100 horses, 2,300 camels, and more than 30,000 sheep and goats either killed or captured. Their own losses were 3 officers, 25 Italian O.R.s and 24 native troops. In spite of Patriot losses, doubtless magnified by those who reported them, Rome was not satisfied with the achievements of the Military Governor Mombelli and he was replaced at the end of 1926 by Gen. Teruzzi, a good Fascist who had earlier seen service in Tripolitania. Indeed, some indication of the dissatisfaction felt by the Fascist hierarchy at the inability of their Governors to break the resistance of a few Bedouin may be judged by the fact that there was a succession of no less than five of these between 1923 and 1933: Bongiovanni, Mombelli, Teruzzi, Siciliani, and Graziani.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

of their forts. In the bend of the Sirtica they occupied only Ajadabiya, joined by a corridor to the little port of al-Zuwaitina. Farther to the north they held a territory running from the coast to the line Qaminis–Suluq–al-Shlaidima–al-Rajma–al-Abyar–Jardis al-'Abid–Taknis–al-Gharib–Talmaitha. There was a gap between this territory and the tract of country held farther to the east, running from the coast at Marsa Susa to the line al-Zawiya al-Baida–Slanta–Jardis al-Jarrari–al-Fayidiya–Bilqis–Khawalan–al-Qaiqab. This gap, the Wadi al-Kuf area, was entirely in guerrilla hands and necessitated communication by sea between Banghazi and Darna. In the Darna and Tubruq districts Italian control was uncertain, and political rather than military.[1] The people there were quiet only because the Italians left them alone. Moreover, in the spring of 1927, when Teruzzi's first campaigning season began, the Patriots still had, according to Italian records, some 1,000 men in the eastern Sirtica, some 1,600, about a quarter of whom were horsed, on the plateau, and about 100 in the Marmarica. However, these estimates were almost certainly magnified to excuse failure, and although the war dragged on for many more months the issue, if ever in doubt, was decided during Teruzzi's term of office in 1927 and 1928. His plan to hasten the end of the war was twofold: to clear the Wadi al-Kuf area of guerrillas and to clean up the Sirtica.

Local actions began their usual seasonal run in the spring of 1927 and included one of the rare Italian defeats in a hard fight at al-Rahaiba, to the south of al-Marj, on 28 March, in which they lost 6 officers and 306 native troops. Otherwise Sidi 'Umar's men suffered heavily, especially in two encounters with the Italian forces in the middle of July, and their consequent dispersal enabled Teruzzi to carry out his plan of combing the Wadi al-Kuf area, where deep ravines and dense undergrowth had always given the guerrillas a refuge when hard pressed, and by so doing to link up the western (Banghazi and al-Marj) and eastern (Shahhat and Darna) sectors. This was accomplished during the summer and considerably eased Italian communications. During an 80 days' campaign the Patriots lost, according to Teruzzi, 1,296 dead, 2,844 camels and 5,000 sheep slaughtered, and 842 camels, 18,000 sheep, 172 head of cattle, and 26 horses

[1] Op. cit., pp. 43 seq.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

*175 captured, against 2 Italian officers, 5 airmen, and 61 native
*648 troops dead. The 'Abid and Bara'asa, the two tribes which
*795 from the beginning were the most tenacious supporters of Sidi
[727] 'Umar, were the most severely hit. The 1927 summer campaign left the Patriots dispersed and they had now clearly lost the initiative in the more open country. They still held out, however, in the more broken and wooded area of the *jashsha* in the neighbourhood of Bir Qandula, Shnaishan, and the Wadi Mahajja, and to the south of Jardis al-'Abid, where they could more easily escape detection from the air and disperse before superior forces. Here Sidi 'Umar reorganized his guerrilla bands. His difficulties and casualties were becoming formidable. Indeed, in the summer of 1928 Teruzzi could speak with some justice of the war on the plateau as large-scale police action. In evidence of his success in the work of pacification he cites that between May 1927 and February 1929 he recovered 3,755 rifles from the Bedouin. Fighting still went on, it is true, and raids against the submitted sections, particularly against the Hasa tribe, even became fiercer, but the area of guerrilla activities was more
[729] restricted. On the last day of March 1928 the Patriots suffered an unusually severe defeat in the southern steppe country, in
[728] which they lost 200 dead, 70 prisoners, and 1,500 camels and 20 horses killed. Sidi 'Umar was forced, for the first time, to make contact with the Italians and treat with them for a truce.

*175 The development of operations in Tripolitania had pointed
*648 to greater co-ordination between the forces attempting to crush
*795 Arab resistance in that country and those attempting the same
728 in Cyrenaica, so at the end of 1928 the two colonies were placed under the single direction of Badoglio, and early in 1929 Teruzzi was replaced in Cyrenaica by Siciliani with the rank of Vice-Governor. Badoglio marked his appointment with a flamboyant proclamation offering the Arabs the choice between unconditional surrender and extermination. Its tone defeated its end, if peace was its end, though Italian writers assume that it influenced Sidi 'Umar in making his approach to the Italians in June 1929, together with the noted guerrilla leader Sidi Fadil bu 'Umar and Sayyid al-Hasan al-Rida, a boy of the Sanusi family who accompanied the guerrilla forces on the plateau. A truce was agreed to by both sides and continued for five months while negotiations for peace dragged on. The Arab and Italian

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

accounts of these negotiations are very different and in many particulars contradictory. Graziani's account is certainly tendentious and I see no reason to doubt the Arab statements that Sidi 'Umar would not sign terms unless they were witnessed by observers from Egypt and Tunisia and agreed to by Sayyid Idris. As he was thus claiming to be the representative of the Head of a sovereign State the Italians would not agree to these conditions and discussions broke down. The Italians, however, prevailed on the boy al-Hasan to sign an agreement in their favour, and greatly to his own personal advantage, at Banghazi. This agreement was at once repudiated by Sidi 'Umar, and Sayyid al-Hasan deserted him, followed by most of the Bara'asa-Darsa band, which Sidi 'Umar's followers nicknamed 'The Army of Flour', chiding them for selling themselves for rations. Fighting broke out again in November and on 8 January 1930 Sayyid al-Hasan's followers, who had been kept under supervision, resisted the Italian attempt to disarm them and 80 of them were killed while another 100, including the Sayyid, surrendered. Ten days later Sidi 'Umar's own force was beaten on the Wadi Mahajja, he himself being wounded and barely escaping with his life. From February 1929 the Patriots had lost another 800 men killed, 2,000 camels, and a vast number of sheep and goats. About 2,000 Bedouin had fled with their animals and goods into Egypt. Against these losses the Italians had lost only 6 officers, 6 other nationals, and 102 native troops.

VI

It is here necessary to leave Sidi 'Umar fighting his desperate guerrilla fight on the plateau to note developments in the Sirtica, which Teruzzi had decided to clean up in 1927. After their drive on Ajadabiya at the commencement of hostilities in 1923 the Italians had been content to sit in the village, leaving the Bedouin in control of the country around it. But operations in Tripolitania had drawn Italian forces slowly farther away from their coastal bases towards the south and east and were now being held up because the Tripolitanian elements which still resisted were able to retire into the Sirtica and its hinterland, where they were difficult to contact and could rely on recruits and supplies from their Cyrenaican kinsmen. The

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

to take over the command, Sidi 'Umar had, in spite of almost invariable defeats, kept the initiative. Mobility, knowledge of the country, and daring still enabled his men, worn out though they were by long years of hardship and hunger, to strike where they would, keeping Italian posts, patrols, and convoys always on the alert. Graziani now closed on them from both the plateau and the steppe country to the south. All the earths were stopped. The view-halloo was given wherever they broke. Flight to Egypt alone could save them, and this they would not take.

Graziani was determined to wrest the initiative from the guerrillas. He reorganized his forces for the last round in the *'guerra senza quartiere'* into small mobile patrols to keep the whole of the forest country under surveillance and to attack the enemy wherever they met him, giving him no rest. To prevent the guerrillas from obtaining supplies and reinforcements from the civilian population he disarmed the tribesmen, confiscating from them thousands of rifles and millions of rounds of ammunition, and made possession of arms a capital offence. He instituted the *'tribunale volante'*, a military court flown from point to point to try, and execute, all who had dealings of any kind with the guerrillas. He reduced the Libyan units by more than two-thirds, with the intention of disbanding them altogether later. In the meanwhile he distributed among the 750 Libyans retained in service rifles of a different calibre from rifles in Patriot hands to prevent leakage of ammunition. At the same time he closed the Sanusiya lodges, confiscated their estates, and exiled their Shaikhs to the Island of Ustica. He also much improved the communications of the colony, thereby easing his supply problem and economizing man-power.

It may be doubted whether all these measures would have been effective if he had not also started his immense concentration camps for the entire tribal population of Cyrenaica, about whose feelings the General had no illusions. In taking this step the Italians were doing no more than others had done before them and have done after them, for an army fighting guerrillas is fighting an entire population. The first concentrations of January 1930 were found to be too near the area of military operations, for the prisoners, in spite of close surveillance, still managed to supply the guerrillas with some of their requirements;

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

so most of the Bedouin were removed to the *barqa al-baida* and the Sirtica. In this bleak country were herded in the smallest camps possible 80,000 men, women, and children, and 600,000 beasts, in the summer of 1930. Hunger, disease, and broken hearts took a heavy toll of the imprisoned population. Bedouin die in a cage. Loss of livestock was also great, for the beasts had insufficient grazing near the camps on which to support life, and the herds, already decimated in the fighting, were almost wiped out by the camps.

The guerrillas thus found themselves cut off from local sources of supply and forced more and more to rely on Egypt for the bare necessities of life and of war. For years a considerable part of their supplies had come from there, paid for by Bedouin produce, money raised by customs charges, and funds collected throughout the Arab and Muslim world. Supplies came through the port of al-Sallum, and the Egyptian Frontiers Administration must have closed its eyes to supplies going into Cyrenaica as tightly as to refugees going out of it. The Marmarica had been declared by the Italians a military zone, its people being removed to concentration camps, and the closed frontier was patrolled by armoured cars and planes with instructions to destroy any caravans they spotted, but, in spite of these precautions, supplies continued to reach the Patriots. Graziani therefore decided to run a line of barbed-wire entanglement from the sea to Jaghbub and into the dunes to the south of it, a distance of over 300 km. The work was completed early in September 1931 and control along the wire was operated through fortified posts, a telephone system, and aviation camps. Perhaps nothing shows more clearly the slow imprisonment of the people of Cyrenaica than the use of barbed wire on an ever-increasing scale to imprison them in concentration camps within their country and to shut them off from the outside world: in 1922–3 the Italians spent only 27,000 Lire on barbed wire in Cyrenaica but by 1930–1 they could boast of spending 14,111,000 Lire.[1]

In spite of all Graziani's energy and threats Sidi 'Umar and his men would neither surrender nor flee the country. In 1930 the bands of the Bara'asa, 'Abid, and Hasa-'Abaidat were still harassing Italian detachments and raiding the herds of those who had submitted. Nevertheless, Italian activities had now

[1] *La Nuova Italia d'Oltremare*, 1933–4, vol. i, p. 239.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

common effort to reconstruct the life of the country. The first object of the Government was now to increase the Bedouin population, not to destroy it, for the country could never be prosperous in its present depopulated state. At least 20,000 refugees had taken refuge during the war in Egypt and elsewhere and they could not be expected to return unless a more conciliatory policy were pursued.

Selected Arab officials were attached to the Italian Consulates in Egypt to do propaganda among the refugees, and those who returned were given food, clothing, and beasts. This policy met with some success. In Egypt, where most of the refugees lived, the Bedouin were faced with the choice between becoming wage-earners or leading a gipsy life on the edge of the cultivations. The temptation to return to their country, where they were used to a life of freedom and plenty, was too great for many of them, in spite of Italian occupation. It was, as they say, *yakhtar akhaf al-dararain*, the choice of the lighter of two evils. Between 5,000 and 10,000 must have returned by the middle of 1940. Besides a general amnesty to induce the refugees to return, pardon was granted to almost all political prisoners, and by 1939 only a very few remained in jail or enforced exile. Instructions were given for this fact to be made widely known to neutralize anti-Italian propaganda in Arab countries.

It was possible to adopt a milder policy because the Bedouin had been disarmed and were unable to cause further trouble. It had long been recognized that while they possessed arms they would use them against the Italians if given an opportunity. As early as August 1912, in the very premature *Norme Sommarie* for Political Officers, it was stressed that the Bedouin regard rifles as essential as horses and that no amount of persuasion would make them part with either, especially as 'there is not an Arab in the country who, in asking himself why we have come, does not reply to himself and to others, "To take our lands, our beasts, our women" '. Because of the strong feelings of the Bedouin on an issue which touched their manhood no very determined attempt was made to disarm those tribal sections which submitted to the Italians till the second Italo-Sanusi war was well advanced, and it was not till Graziani was made Vice-Governor in March 1930 that total disarmament of the civilian population was aimed at.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

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In 1932 the Bedouin were released from the concentration camps into which they had been herded in 1930 and were allowed to return to their tribal territories. In spite of their losses in manpower, stock, and arms, it was felt that the closest watch must still be kept on them. Local officials were, therefore, instructed to keep detailed lists of distribution of tents, and soldiers were posted to picket the camps and prevent any movement without a permit from an Italian official. Any breach of the regulation, which was in force till 1938, was punished with imprisonment. This supervision by what amounted to a strict pass system was finally given up by Balbo, as it was found that it irritated the Bedouin without serving any useful purpose.

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Like other governments that have had dealings with nomads, the Italian bureaucrats in charge of the administration could not abide that they should live free from their interference. It was held that it was wicked to be a nomad and that it was the duty of an administration to compel them to settle. Graziani declared that the nomads are 'enemies, and destroyers, of agriculture. Everywhere, in fact, the nomad has passed he has destroyed woods, trees and fields.' Therefore, 'the nomads have no justification and no right to claim to stay in areas of assured development, such as those of the Cyrenaican plateau, rich in promise of tree and cereal culture, but ought to be excluded from it for ever, leaving room for thousands and thousands of Italian arms which are stretched out there, anxious to begin again to till and make fruitful this ancient Roman earth'. Graziani held, furthermore, that not only must the Bedouin be kept off the fertile plateau, but must be stabilized in the country on the edge of the steppe where, in his opinion, they had sufficient and suitable land for pasturing and sowing. They would there find themselves in an environment perfectly responding '*alla loro natura di rapsodi del deserto*'. Here their every move, every halt, every camp ought to be under rigid supervision by government officials. Braida adds that by 1935 Graziani's plan had been put into operation in its main proposals.[1] The plateau was reserved for metropolitan colonization and the steppe for the Bedouin, who were subject to such rigorous control that it might be regarded as a prelude to

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[1] Graziani, op. cit., p. 123; Vittorino Braida, *Memoria per l'Ufficiale dei Reparti indigeni della Cirenaica*, 1935, pp. 61–3.